

THE NOTE OF JUBILANCE

CHEERFULNESS SHOULD CHARACTERIZE CHRISTMAS-TIDE.

ON THE DUTIES OF THE TIME

Kindness and Benevolence to the Poor and the Distressed Incubated—The New Song Which Is to Be the Sweetest and the Most Inspiring Yet Composed—'Twill Yet Be Sung in the Heavenly Land.

Entered according to Act of Parliament of Canada, in the year 1904, by William Baily, of Toronto, at the Dept. of Agriculture, Ottawa.

Los Angeles, Cal., Dec. 4.—In this sermon there is the jubilant note of the approaching Christmas festivities, which, the preacher contends, should be characterized by cheerfulness, kindness and benevolence to the poor and the distressed. The text is Psalm xvi, "Oh, sing unto the Lord a new song!"

The finest of pictures is yet to be painted; the most perfect sculpture is yet to be chiseled; the best of poems is yet to be penned; the sweetest and the most inspiring of songs is yet to be composed. We speak of the master-poets, artists, sculptors and musicians as though the poetical and artistic deeds of the past could never be excelled. This, however, is not true. Homer and Virgil and Scott and Wordsworth and Burns and Tennyson and Longfellow and Lowell and Poe are master-poets to us merely because their poems excel in beauty of expression or delicacy of rhythm or depth of thought the productions of all other poets who have yet appeared. Raphael and Michael Angelo and Murillo and Leonardo da Vinci and Turner are master artists to us merely because no artists have yet appeared who could approach them in perfection of form and glory of color. Beethoven and Handel and Bach and Gluck and Haydn and Mozart and Chopin and Mendelssohn and Wagner are master musicians to us because they surpass all other musicians in perfection of harmony and grandeur of conception. No composers before them and none since have attained the mastery that they reach in their sublime art.

But, though these old master-musicians are masters to us, they were not masters to themselves. They struggled continually to give expression to higher and nobler conceptions than they were ever able to write. Even in their minds there were harmonies far better than those that they have given us. Their masterpieces fell far short of their ideals. In their rhapsodies and dream lives they were continually exploring new realms of perfect sound harmonies which were continually crying to them: "Set me to music. Play me up the piano or the harp. Sing me in solo and oratorio." The result was these old masters were continually trying to make more perfect combinations of sound, to echo to mortal ears the strange, weird, transcendent voices that were calling to them out of the "musical worlds of perfection."

David, the psalmist, was a great musical composer. He always strove to originate new musical themes. If he could not compose new ones, then he wanted to hear what some one else had composed. The first time Mozart heard one of Bach's hymns played he cried out in ecstasy: "Thank God, I learn something absolutely new!" So David again and again in his psalms cries out for something new in musical praise. We not only find the words of his text, "Sing unto the Lord a new song," in the Ninety-sixth Psalm, but we find them in the Ninety-eighth and in the One Hundredth and Forty-ninth, and we also find the same words in the book of Isaiah. The song they longed to hear will yet be sung in the heavenly land.

Our holiday song, in the first place, should be a cheerful song. It should not be sung in a minor key; it should not be a dirge or requiem, a lament or a dead march in "Saul"; it should not be an antiphony for the matins of the dead; it should be joy on the wing; it should be the chorus of "Laughing Waters"; it should be

a Hosanna! a Halleluiah, a psalm, a doxology and a praise. Tears and sobs have no place in the new song which we should sing during our coming holiday season. What said David in reference to this new song—make a sad song unto the Lord? No. In seven distinct places in the Psalms the great singer of Israel cries, "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord." The first great essential of our coming Christmas song should be cheerfulness. We should hear it in every sound that is uttered; we should hear it in the loud notes; we should hear it in the soft notes as well.

The new song of Moses and the Lamb should be a cheerful song. And yet the strange fact is that many people, when they try to sing their gospel songs, have the chargers which they harness to their musical chariots walk with leaden feet instead of flying with the wings of the song birds. No minister of the Lord Jesus Christ, no Sunday school teacher, no Christian teacher, will ever make the new songs for Christ truly tuned songs when they start them in the minor key. "The great success of your father's ministry," said Dr. Reed, the president of Dickinson College, to me some months ago, "was his unbounded cheerfulness." Then Dr. Reed said, in a kind of a soliloquy, "Oh, that all gospel messengers could make their sermons a cheerful message for tired men and women!"

Yes, the new song we sing ought to have the keynote of cheerfulness. That is the first great essential. Why should it not be cheerful? If we believe in God, if we believe in what Christ has done for us, have not we a belief which should uplift every heart into the highest realms of Christian joy? Suppose I am an artist. Suppose I send one of my pictures to the World's Fair at St. Louis or to the Salon of Paris. Suppose I to-day receive a letter from the authorities of that art exhibit something like this: "Dear Sir—We are glad to inform you that your picture has received the first prize in the class of portrait painting. You will not only receive a medal for the same, but also a check for \$5,000, which is to go to the winner of that prize. We congratulate you on your success, and we are glad that your state will hereafter be known as the home of one of the greatest artists of this generation."

What would I do if I received such a letter as that? Would I put that letter away and say nothing? Would I walk around with sepulchral countenance and dolorous voice, saying, "I have won a \$5,000 prize and international fame?" No; my eyes would flash, my cheeks would flush, my nerves would tingle with glorious excitement. I would go home at once to my wife and children and say: "Loved ones, my artistic position is now assured. I will be able to earn for us all the money we need." If the news that we have won an earthly prize makes us so happy, how ought we to feel when we realize that a heavenly and eternal blessing has been conferred upon us? Shall we not sing a cheerful song when we realize all that Christ has done for us and ours?

Our coming holiday song should sing the joy of our salvation. It must do more than that. It should sing about the happiness of some one else. Therefore our new song should be a helpful song. Jenny Lind the great "Swedish Nightingale," regarded her voice as a gift from God, bestowed that she might help her fellow man. May we look upon our new song to be sung to God as a song to help those who are in physical, mental or spiritual distress.

Oh, that we in our coming holiday song could have the beautiful purpose which "the human thrush," Jenny Lind, had in her gentle, consecrated Christian heart! She was always doing some kindness to others. Lablache, the great Italian basso, when he first heard her, said, "Her voice is so true that each note is like a perfect pearl." Jenny Lind heard what her great Italian contemporary had said. When she met him at their first rehearsal she smilingly stepped to his side and took his hat; then, placing her lips to its edge, she sang a beautiful French romance. Then she gave him back his hat, saying, "There, M. Lablache, is your hat, filled with my pearls of song." That was a beautiful, com-

pliment by one great artist to another. But Jenny Lind did more than sing handfuls of musical pearls into Lablache's hat; she sang thousands of dollars out of the world's pocketbooks. Then she scattered thousands and hundreds of thousands of dollars everywhere. She gave away 30,000 florins when she made her triumphant musical tour through Germany. She gave to England's poor over \$300,000 when this queen of song sang in the kingdom in her great sister, Queen Victoria. She gave \$50,000 to America's poor when she traveled through our states. As Jenny Lind sang to her fellow men and women a helpful song, so should we make our new song of the holiday season a helpful song.

When we sing our new song shall we bring spiritual blessings to others also? The great hosts which shall enter heaven may be augmented if we sing our new song as we ought to sing it. Charles H. Spurgeon, the famous London preacher, once had a wonderful dream. He saw a great throng passing through the gates of the new Jerusalem. "Who are these, and whence came they?" he asked. "These," said his guide, "are the apostles and martyrs. These are they who have laid down their lives for Christ." "But," answered Spurgeon, "I never was an apostle or a martyr. I cannot walk with that throng." Soon, however, he saw another multitude, greater than the first, crowding through the same celestial gates. "Who are these, and whence came they?" he again asked. "These are the sinners. These are the Zachaeuses and the Mary Magdalenes and the women of Samaria, who came from the lowest depths of sin." "Ah," said Mr. Spurgeon, "if those are the great sinners, then I can go in among them. As you and I begin to join the redeemed ones are we going with our friends? Shall not our new song of gospel love first be sung by some invalid's bed to bring that sick man to Christ? Shall it not be sung among the spiritual outcasts who never have bowed the knee at the cross? Yes, my friends, our new song should be a cheerful song on account of our salvation. It should also be a helpful song, which will lead people to surrender their lives to the work of the Divine Master.

"Well," says one, "how can I sing a song of cheerfulness and of gospel hope for myself or for others when every day I feel as did the writer of the One Hundred and Thirtieth Psalm. Then all was sadness and gloom to him. He seems to see the Jews huddled together in captivity. There he seems to gather them together, as the Jews to-day are gathered at the foot of Mount Moriah, at the 'wailing wall' under the walls of the old temple. Their captors come to them and cry: 'Sing, sing! Sing as you used to sing in Jerusalem!' But they answer, 'How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?' Then you say to me: 'Coming Christmas will find me in a strange land. Why you say, 'everything in my life is so different from what it used to be. So many of my loved ones are gone. My daughter was here last Christmas; she is gone now forever. Is it a mother's vacant chair, or a father's or wife's or a husband's? Yes, I have been a good father to the grave, and that grave has taken the best I have. It is not the time for me to sing; it is the time for sobs. Then I cannot give financially as I used to give. I have had many financial reverses during the past few months. Then I cannot do as I used to do for others. My own health is gradually breaking. How can I sing a new song? I am like Rubini and Bordini and Curzoni and Pasta and Malibran. After their voices went they were gone forever.' Ah, my friends, you can sing the new song of hope and salvation if you will. The great trouble of your life is not that you have had great troubles, but that you have not waded way down knee deep, hip deep, shoulder deep, lip deep, into God's promises and comforts to get a suitable inspiration for your new song.

The great trouble with you is that when troubles come, instead of throwing yourselves more and more upon the divine strength, you have let go of God's strong hand and only depended on your own strength. After Jenny Lind's name had become famous as a singer her voice began to fail. "Oh," said she to herself, "if I could only go and see Garcia, I know he would help me." Garcia was at that time the greatest musical developer of prima donnas. She left Stockholm and went to Paris. As soon as she entered his studio and sang Garcia said, "My good girl, you have no voice, or, rather, I should say you have a voice, but you are now the verge of losing it. Your organs are strained and worn out. The only advice I can offer is to recommend you not to sing a note for three months. At the end of that time come to me and I will see what I can do for you." That was good advice for Jenny Lind, but it is not good advice for a Christian teacher to give you in reference to your learning how to sing the new song of Christ. What you need is not rest, not retirement, not seclusion; you need to practice your gospel throat. You need to learn how to sing the new song by delving deep in the promises of God, and then by singing God's promises to your own life and to the lives of all around you. Sing! Sing! Keep on singing! Sing forth the promises of God! Sing what he has done for others. Sing about what he has done and will continue to do for you!

But lastly I assert that our new song for the coming holidays should be a triumphant song. In it we should hear the ring of the coming conquest of the world for Christ; in it we should know not only that man as an individual will be saved, but that there shall come a time when nations and peoples of all climes shall worship our Christ as their master and king. Here and there temporarily one of God's disciples may seem to be driven back; but, after all, the great march of the Christian army

is forward. We are all marching to a millennial day when Christ as the leader of the great army of victory shall have his standards above every land, waving over every nation and over every sea. Our new song should be a triumphant song.

Would to-day I might convince you of the sureness of Christ's conquest over all the nations of the world as vividly as that great dramatic preacher William Dawson brought it before his London hearers nearly a century ago. He was a man of most remarkable personality. He had an imagination all aglow and on fire. With the power of a mighty word painter he was describing the conquest of the world. He portrayed a grand procession marching before Christ, the Prophet, Priest and King, in a coronation pageant. First came the prophets, then the priests and the apostles, then the martyrs, row after row, line after line, army after army. Then, after all the redeemed dead had marched past, there came the living. First came the earthly princes and princesses and nobles. Then there marched forth millions upon millions of the human race. Then, after he had wheeled into line all generations of all times and all principalities and powers, the great Methodist preacher suddenly stopped. Then in stentorian tones he commenced to sing that grand old hymn of Edward Perrott:

All hail the power of Jesus' name, Let angels prostrate fall, Bring forth the royal diadem And crown him Lord of all. So powerful was the effect, so overwhelming was the impression of the coming conquest of Christ over the world, that the great audience sprang to its feet and took up the refrain and sang it louder and louder and louder until the very heavens seemed to shake. Oh, my friends, cannot you feel that our new song for the coming Christmas holidays should be a triumphant one? Shall it not have the same triumphant ring in it as had Martin Luther's mighty hymn when the soldiers of Gustavus Adolphus sang it before the battle of Lepsic, and also sang it again before the battle of Lutzen, where their noble leader laid down his life? Ah, yes, man may live and may die, but God's workers always fill in the break and the work goes on. Our new song must be a song of triumph. God can and will conquer this world and rule the nations of the earth as his own.

When the musical leader in the old village choir loft, before the organ and the piano had forced their way into the church edifices, wanted to start the hymn, he would strike his tuning fork and lift it to his ear. For the new song of the coming Christmas holidays I would strike the tuning fork of hope and life and eternal conquest through Christ. May the same angel which came over the Christmas manger sing for us today ever that rilled tomb a new song of salvation for a dying world, and a conquest for Christ of all peoples, both in this world as well as in that which we are to enter hereafter.

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